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OFFICE OF PETITIONS

In re Application of
Martha G. Welch et al
Application No. 10/799,941
Filed: March 11, 2004
Attorney Docket No. 5199-134

: DECISION ON PETITION
: UNDER 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6)

This is a decision on the petition filed October 26, 2007 which is being treated under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6), to accept an unintentionally delayed claim under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) for the benefit of priority to a prior-filed provisional application.

The petition is **DISMISSED**.

A petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6) is only applicable to those applications filed on or after November 29, 2000. Further, the petition is appropriate only after expiration of the period specified in 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(ii) and must be filed during the pendency of the nonprovisional application. In addition, the petition must be accompanied by:

- (1) the reference required by 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) and 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(i) to the prior-filed application, unless previously submitted;
- (2) the surcharge set forth in § 1.17(t); and
- (3) a statement that the entire delay between the date the claim was due under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(5)(ii) and the date the claim was filed was unintentional. The Director may require additional information where there is a question whether the delay was unintentional.

This pending nonprovisional application was filed on March 11, 2004, within twelve months of the filing date of the prior-filed provisional application, Application No. 60/518,389, which was filed on November 6, 2003, and for which priority is claimed. A reference to the prior-filed provisional application has been included in an amendment to the first sentence of the specification following the title.

However, the amendment is not acceptable as drafted since it improperly incorporates by reference the prior-filed application. An incorporation by reference statement added after an

application's filing date is not effective because no new matter can be added to an application after its filing date (*see* 35 U.S.C. § 132(a)). If an incorporation by reference statement is included in an amendment to the specification to add a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) after the filing date of the application, the amendment would not be proper. When a benefit claim under 35 U.S.C. § 119(e) is submitted after the filing of an application, the reference to the prior application cannot include an incorporation by reference statement of the prior application. *See Dart Industries v. Banner*, 636 F.2d 684, 207 USPQ 273 (C.A.D.C. 1980). *Note* MPEP §§ 201.06(c) and 608.04(b).

Further, the Application Data Sheet (ADS) submitted with the instant petition is unsigned.

Accordingly, before the petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6) can be granted, a renewed petition under 37 CFR 1.78(a)(6) and either an Application Data Sheet or a substitute amendment (complying with 37 CFR 1.121 and 37 CFR 1.76(b)(5)) deleting the incorporation by reference statement, are required.

Further correspondence with respect to this matter should be addressed as follows:

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Any questions concerning this matter may be directed to the undersigned at (571) 272-3208.

Karen Creasy
Karen Creasy
Petitions Examiner
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